

Cover Letter – BCIA Board of Governors, District 3

February 6, 2026

Dear Members of the BCIA Nomination Committee,

I am pleased to submit my nomination for the position of Registrant Board Member representing Regional Electoral District 3. As a BCIA Registrant in good standing living and working on Vancouver Island, I care deeply about the role agrologists play in stewarding land, water, and food systems in British Columbia.

My background combines scientific training with applied agricultural leadership. I was educated in biology and natural sciences and have spent my career working at the intersection of production agriculture, business stewardship, and long-term land management. Today, as General Manager of Blue Grouse Estate Winery in the Cowichan Valley, I oversee viticulture, environmental practices, capital planning, and strategic development across vineyard and winery operations. I began working for Blue Grouse as vineyard manager in 2017, overseeing a 10-fold production increase and have been general manager for over 4 years. The work is inherently systems-based, balancing soil health, water availability, climate variability, and economic sustainability.

Water sustainability has become a defining focus of my recent work. Since late 2023 I have been involved as an advisory table member to the Xwulqw'selu (Koksilah) Watershed Water Sustainability Plan being led by Cowichan Tribes and the Province of British Columbia. Our goal is to assess First Nations, agricultural, cultural and historical water demand given the environmental and climate-driven supply risk across the watershed. This has included collaboration with engineers, local governments, Cowichan Tribes, and community partners to explore practical infrastructure and governance solutions that protect ecological function while supporting viable agriculture. As this initiative is expected to conclude in 2026, my recurring commitments to advisory meetings and committee work will wind down, creating the capacity to dedicate the time and attention required to serve effectively on the BCIA Board.

In leadership roles, I am accustomed to setting direction, working through complex problems, and building relationships. I am responsible for multi-million-dollar projects, operational and capital budgeting, and the management of teams of up to 25 staff. An equally important dimension of this leadership has been working in partnership with First Nations and Indigenous-led initiatives, where listening, respect for Indigenous knowledge systems, and relationship-based decision-making are essential. I view reconciliation not as a single action but as an ongoing responsibility.

I recognize that service on a regulatory Board carries responsibilities distinct from operational leadership. The *Professional Governance Act* establishes BCIA's duty to regulate in the public interest, and Board members play a critical role in upholding that mandate through sound governance, ethical oversight, and support for competent professional practice.

In developing toward full professional practice, I have benefited from the guidance of my mentor, Kelly Eakins of Madrone Environmental Services, whose experience and leadership in professional agrology and watershed science have helped shape my understanding of regulatory expectations, ethical responsibility, and the standards required under the Act.

It would be an honour to support BCIA in strengthening professional practice, advancing science-based stewardship, and ensuring resilient agricultural systems for the future of British Columbia.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Abbott', with a stylized, cursive script.

Michael Abbott

BSc, MB, AAg

## Education

### **MBA Sustainable innovation (GPA 3.8)**

University of Victoria  
2022-2024

Awards: Honorary Best  
Capstone, Pay-It-Forward

### **BSc Specialization Ecology (GPA 3.7)**

Concordia University  
2010-2017

Awards: Dean's list 2011

## Professional Memberships

**BC Institute of Agrologists**  
Articling Agrologist (AAg),  
2025-Present

## Website

[bluegrouse.ca](http://bluegrouse.ca)

[jacksonfamilywines.com](http://jacksonfamilywines.com)

## Languages

English (Native)

French (Fluent)

Swedish (Conversational)

Spanish (Conversational)

A dynamic leader with a blended background of business and ecology, experienced in sustainability, operational leadership, and stakeholder engagement. Skilled at aligning environmental stewardship with organizational goals to drive impactful change.

## Work Experience

### **Blue Grouse Estate Winery (Jackson Family Wines)**

#### **General Manager**

2023 – Present

- Provides strategic leadership and direction for Jackson Family Wines' Canadian national brand.
- Forges and maintains key partnerships with businesses, community organizations, and government both provincially and federally.
- Collaborates with the Jackson Family Executive Team on company strategies and reporting.
- Manages and mentors a cross-functional team to achieve company strategic goals.
- Oversees financial planning, performance, and budgeting processes.
- Leads sustainability initiatives and integrates environmentally responsible operations.
- Presents capital and operational budgets to shareholders quarterly.

#### **Operations Manager**

2021 – 2023

- Led due diligence efforts during company acquisition.
- Directed environmental survey and remediation efforts for successful sales agreement.
- Developed and executed change management strategies during the company's transition.
- Managed capital expenditure projects, ensuring timely and on-budget execution.
- Supervised recruitment, training, and performance reviews for all staff.
- Built and maintained strong relationships with suppliers and key industry stakeholders.

#### **Vineyard Manager**

2017 – 2021

- Managed all aspects of agricultural production, including vineyard operations and expansion.
- Led vineyard development and property acquisition strategies.
- Supervised vineyard staff and provided mentorship to foster ongoing growth and development.
- Contributed to discussions at ministry meetings on water use in the Koksilah/Cowichan watersheds

## Better Fishing Company/John Jenkins Fishing

### Operations/Deckhand

2012 – 2017

- Various seasonal deckhand roles fishing for Albacore Tuna, Dungeness Crab and Spot Prawns
- Multiple months off shore fishing in Pacific Ocean
- Class 3 transportation of product to wholesale market

## The Raptors

### Wildlife Management

2016- 2017

- Worked as a Biologist in wildlife control/management
- Educated public and commercial customers
- Controlled problem species at industrial sites with active falconry

## Sustainability & Leadership Initiatives

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### Candidate Crew Member Royal Canadian Marine Search And Rescue

2025

- Recent candidate to the Cowichan Bay Station of the RCMSR
- Membership pending onboarding interview/screening

### Koksilah Watershed Plan Community Advisory Table (CCAT)

2023 – Present

- Contributing to the development of BC's first Government-to-Government Watershed Plan, ensuring alignment with environmental, cultural, commercial and community needs
- Collaborating with Cowichan Tribes, provincial ministries, and local stakeholders to reflect shared priorities and values in the plan

### Malahat Nation RNG Feasibility Study

2024

- Conducted a feasibility study to assess the potential for Renewable Natural Gas (RNG) production on Malahat Nation territory
- Evaluated environmental, economic, and technical considerations to support sustainable energy initiatives
- Developed a multi criteria decision analysis framework for optimizing the viability of feedstock opportunities

### BC Wine and Grape Council: Health & Safety Committee

2021 – 2022

- Acted as spokesperson for emerging wine regions, advocating for growth and recognition
- Served as committee member on the Short Crop Resiliency Task Group, developing strategies to address industry challenges
- Served on the Health and Safety Committee developing action plans